

Dear Friends and Family,

We have much to praise the Lord for in this New Year! He has truly been our Shepherd as He has guided, nurtured and protected both us and our churches through a difficult, but good 2005. Join us for a pictorial prayer and praise letter...

“Eternal Grace” Presbyterian Church Celebrates its First Birthday!

Tomorrow (Sunday Feb. 5) in the costal city of Guayaquil, “Eternal Grace” (*Gracia Eterna* in Spanish) Presbyterian Church celebrates its first year of life together. You may remember that this mission church is the fruit of the merging of two former church plants – “St. Andrew’s” (*San Andrés*) and “St. Agustin” (*San Agustin*). The congregation has recently completed its first cycle of discipleship classes and in December celebrated 15 ocean-side baptisms! We praise God that this church is growing and maturing!



Praise God for faithful participation in the **Adult Discipleship Program** at “Eternal Grace” Church



Please pray for Ecuadorian pastor: **Christian Troya**, his wife **Ruth** and their boys **Jhoel & Jairo**

Getting ready to Graduate!

Stacy, Natalie Booth and Cecilia Balareso are excited about the possibility of the several women at “Sowers of Christ” Quichua church who are about ready to complete two different levels of basic education. Five ladies, such as Paulina (pictured at left), are working hard to complete a basic literacy program – enabling them to read and write for the first time! Three others are close to completing their elementary education – perhaps by this June!

More importantly, through a discipleship program lead by Cecilia (one of our national partners, also pictured), the ladies have grown significantly in their walk with Christ over the last 2 ½ years. The impact of such discipleship is great-touching not only the lives of these ladies, but reaching into their homes, church and community.



Taking a break from their studies: **Cecilia** (left) helps **Paulina** with a Christmas craft project.



Ecuador in the Movies!

Have you seen “End of the Spear”? If not, GO - while it is still in the theaters! Although we personally have not yet had the privilege of seeing this movie (it won't be in Ecuador for several more months), I have heard from several missionary friends that the movie is a compelling, first-class dramatization of the TRUE story of how many of the Waorani people of Ecuador's eastern jungles came to Christ!

This, of course, in part occurred as a result of the five missionaries who gave their lives in 1956, that others might hear the Good News – then and now! If reading is not your deal... here is a chance to sit and soak in God's goodness to the nations.

Living in Grace - Impacting Lives in Ecuador

Dr. Jerry Cross, MTW missionary to Mexico and Brazil, recently taught the “Living in Grace” (LiG) curriculum in Ecuador for the first time. Two four-day workshops, taught in Spanish, were held in Quito and Guayaquil in mid-November. Living in Grace is a discipleship seminar developed by Mission to the World to help transform lives and ministries through a better understanding of the richness of the gospel.

Dr. Cross spoke with many who experienced healing and renewed faith through the Ecuadorian conference.

- “Roberto”, a Presbyterian pastor, agreed to attend the conference but told the organizing pastor that he not only was giving up the pastorate but also his Christian faith because Christianity was not working for him. The harder he tried to live the Christian life the more distant God seemed in his personal relationship with Him, so much so that he had totally lost the joy of his salvation.

But at the conference, “Roberto” understood why Christianity was not working for him. He was trying to please God by what he did rather than serve God because in Christ he was totally and completely pleasing to God. “What a joy it was to see him, along with many others, get so excited again through a renewed relationship with God in Christ,” said Dr. Cross.

- One of the ladies who attended suffered from recurring bouts of depression. Before the conference she had no interest in coming, but a friend of hers told her after the first night that this conference was different from many others and that she should go.

“As I explained the depths of God's love for even the greatest of sinners,” said Dr. Cross, “first I saw tears, then weeping and sobbing for over an hour as I spoke. The next day the pastor said that “Sophia” wanted to speak with me and for a couple of hours I answered her many questions. It was a joy to see her radiant face in the audience for the rest of the conference. Her husband spoke to me and to the leadership of MTW of the tremendous impact the conference had not only on his wife but on so many others as well.”

"The Lord touched many lives through these Living in Grace conferences in Ecuador," said Cross. "It was a wonderful experience." Dr. Cross has been invited to return to Ecuador in the fall of 2006, to multiply this ministry by training national leaders so they may communicate God's grace in a fresh way among the Quichua and Spanish-speaking churches of Ecuador. *(This report was adapted from an article in MTW's "In-Vision" Magazine December 2005)*



Pohl's Praise & Prayer - Feb. / March 2006

1. Praise for **Stacy's health**: As many of you have already celebrated with us, after an unexpected 3 ½ months stay in the States last fall for a major surgery (Thoracic Outlet Decompression) to correct the underlying problem which caused a large blood-clot in Stacy's right arm and a short follow-up surgery this January – Stacy is now enjoying a clean bill of health! Stacy says: "It feels good to be back home in Quito!" Do pray for the 4 of us (and our whole team) as minor illnesses and health problems seem to be plaguing everyone in turn.
2. Praise for **provision of special support needs**: In September we asked you to pray for \$2,900 to cover a one-time support deficit due to extra HMA and moving expenses. We are thankful to the Lord for his provision – via many of you! Over the last four months of 2005, MTW recorded over \$6,500 in extra one-time giving to our ministry account. This not only covered our deficit but also the needed (and unexpected!) travel expenses due to Stacy's surgery. Thank you for your generosity and sacrificial giving that enables us to keep serving the Lord and the people of Ecuador!
3. Pray for **energy, discernment & sensitivity for Craig as Team Leader**: As a team, we have dedicated the last 6 weeks to a special season of prayer for our ministries, churches and families. Pray that as we begin to lay (and test) plans for the coming months (and years!) God would graciously show us HIS way in each situation.
4. Pray for the **San Marcos Singles Ministry & New Leadership Course**: As we shared late last year, God led us to make our church home and serve the congregation of San Marcos (St. Mark's Presbyterian Church) here in Quito. Through discussions with the church's leadership and much prayer and waiting, we feel God has lead us to assist other Ecuadorian leaders in mentoring and discipling the college & career-age singles here at San Marcos. Over the next month or so, Craig has also been asked to help develop a new leadership course (both theoretical and practical) in an effort develop the gifts in many of the young leaders of this congregation. Pray that we would be a healthy, godly influence in the lives of these young adults.
5. Ministries mentioned above:
 - **"Eternal Grace" Church** – Pray that God would continue to mature and grow the congregation in its 2nd year of life! Also, pray for the development of leaders and that the work may become increasingly self-sustaining financially.
 - **"Sowers of Christ" Quichua Church Ladies** – Please pray not only for faithfulness and consistency in their academic studies – but also for the continued spiritual growth of these dear ladies. Pray also for wisdom, creativity and energy for their teachers: Cecilia, Natalie and Stacy.
 - Praise for the continued impact of the Gospel in Ecuador through ministries like **"Living in Grace"**.

Your partners in Christ's Service,



Craig, Stacy, Karis & Aimee Pohl

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